

U. S. S. CLEVELAND (LPD-7)

FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

SH

LPD7/112:ws
5700
Ser 332
2 AUG 1976

From: Commanding Officer, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, D.C. 20374

Subj: Command History, 1975 (OPNAV Report 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B dtd 20 May 1971

Encl: (1) Command History of USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) for CY 1975

1. Enclosure (1) is submitted in accordance with the provisions of reference (a).


JAMES J. RIDGE

COMMAND HISTORY, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7), CY 1975

I: COMMANDING OFFICERS:

CAPTAIN Herbert A. Zoehrer, USN, 01 JAN - 02 May 75

CAPTAIN James J. Ridge, USN, 02 May - 31 DEC 75

II. EVENTS

On completion of her WESTPAC deployment late in CY 1974, CLEVELAND's plan for CY 1975 was to conduct a series of drills, exercises and inspections to iron out kinks, formulate improved planning, train new crew members and ensure continued operational readiness. The holiday leave period ended 6 January and CLEVELAND's crew returned to work in full force. A "fast cruise" was held on 9 January in preparation for the first extended shakedown in CY 1975. CLEVELAND got underway on 13 January for five days to conduct numerous operational tests and exercises; these included surface/air gunnery exercises, General Quarters drills, Abandon Ship drills, and drills in basic engineering casualty control procedures. She also served as primary control ship (PCS) for amphibious training conducted by the Naval Amphibious School, Coronado, California. In addition, CLEVELAND conducted an UNREP with the USS WABASH before returning to port on 17 January.

On 27 January, CLEVELAND embarked Marines from the 17th Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) in preparation for getting underway the next day for Amphibious Operation "BEAD STREAM" with units of PHIBRON FIVE: USS DENVER, USS ANCHORAGE, USS MOBILE, USS MOUNT VERNON, USS BARBOUR COUNTY and the USS RACINE. "BEAD STREAM" included three rehearsals of D-Day at Camp Pendleton, CA., gunnery exercises in Southern California waters and amphibious landings on 1 February by helicopters and surface assault craft. CLEVELAND acted as Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Coordinator during these evolutions.

Upon her return from "BEAD STREAM" CLEVELAND began preparations for her Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (NWAI) scheduled for Spring. Nuclear weapons handling inspections, and training in the nuclear safety program were held for key personnel. CLEVELAND's Weapons Acceptance Readiness preparations included a Naval Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI) Technical Assist visit held on 27 February. A Type Commander Boiler Inspection was also held on 27 February with outstanding results, and the Engineering Department was commended for their work on the boilers.

During the period 2-15 March, CLEVELAND embarked LPD-1016 of Davenport, Iowa, a reserve unit designed to augment the CLEVELAND's complement with two line officers and twenty enlisted personnel of various rates.

The week of 10-14 March found CLEVELAND underway in company with the USS RACINE, USS OGDEN, USS TULARE, and USS MONTICELLO for amphibious operations off Coronado and Camp Pendleton, California. The exercises included a night underway replenishment for CLEVELAND with the USS WICHITA on 13 March. During the week of 17-22 March CLEVELAND participated in Logistics Exercise 1-75, "LASH BARGE", in which CLEVELAND practiced embarking and launching large Lash Barges in her well deck.

Disaster struck on 01 April when a fire was discovered in the CLEVELAND wardroom at 0230, apparently caused by faulty electrical wiring behind the lounge paneling. Fortunately, there were no personnel injuries but the fire caused extensive damage to the wardroom, the lounge area, two officers' staterooms and some smoke and water damage to adjoining staterooms and passageways. Undaunted, CLEVELAND got underway on 2 April for helicopter carrier qualifications with pilots of Marine Attack Helo Squadron 69. The day's operations consisted of 80 landings, including 40 night landings, which resulted in eight USMC pilots achieving day and night deck qualifications.

Following an off-load of ammunition at the Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, California, CLEVELAND returned to port on 3 April and commenced Equal Opportunity Phase II (EO II) including an Action to Counter Racism (ACR) Workshop on 7 April attended by Officers, CPO's and other Petty Officers in middle management positions. This training was conducted in support of the recently instituted Department of Defense Human Goals Program.

RADM B. H. Shepherd, USN, the Navy Inspector General, visited the CLEVELAND on 21 April with members of his staff. The visit was informal in nature and focused on material matters and the effectiveness of training and maintenance aboard ship, the ship's material inspection programs, and adequacy of external repair agency support.

In a ceremony steeped in naval tradition, CAPTAIN James J. Ridge relieved CAPTAIN Herbert A. Zoehrer as Commanding Officer of the USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) on 2 May 1975. Honored guest and speaker for the occasion was REAR ADMIRAL A. W. Price, Jr., Staff, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

On 1 June, 19 Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadets and 3 instructors from the NJROTC Unit of Montrose High School, Montrose, Colorado embarked for an underway orientation cruise 2-6 June. This cruise afforded the guests exposure to life at sea; the crew benefitted as well, for the ship had been in port for the better part of two months conducting maintenance. Included in the activities were basic engineering drills, air tracking/air control exercises, as well as the loading of ammunition at Seal Beach on 5 June. On 9 June, midshipmen from the Naval Academy embarked for summer training.

From June 17 through June 27 CLEVELAND joined 20 other ships, 100 aircraft and 8,000 Navy men and Marines in FLEETEX 2-75 nicknamed "BELL BOX" off the Southern California coast. Some of BELL BOX's objectives were:

1. Exercises in a multi-threat environment in order to improve and enhance readiness.
2. Investigating the operational feasibility of the Mobile Sea Range (MSR) concept. This concept utilized CLEVELAND as the launch platform for missile target drones. It was designed to allow surface missile ships to conduct live firings in an open ocean area without the restrictions normally found at the Pacific Missile Range.
3. Training of Midshipmen.
4. Exercising Navy and Marine forces in the planning, execution, and support of an amphibious RAIDEX. A RAIDEX is a small scale amphibious exercise which involves one or two ships and involves the clandestine insertion of a raid side force on hostile territory.
5. Testing the concept of deploying ASW helicopters and associated command and control equipment on board an LPD in support of task group operations.

In conjunction with objective number 5 above, CLEVELAND embarked a detachment of SH-3 ASW helicopters and a 20' x 8' x 8' mobile van for ASW Command and Control (ASCAC) purposes. The van is referred to as a Mini-ASCAC since it can perform many of the functions of the newly instituted ASCAC Centers aboard CVS's. During BELL BOX CLEVELAND was designated as the launch platform for the BQM-34A Target Drone.

1 July found CLEVELAND underway for a Port Visit to Monterey, California from 3 through 6 July. CLEVELAND helped Monterey celebrate the 4th of July week-end and the Commodore Sloat Festival by holding a very popular Open House for over 3000 visitors. After returning to San Diego on 9 July, the reserve unit LPD-1016 from Davenport, Iowa came aboard for a week-end of training on 12 and 13 July. On 23 July representatives from the Fleet Training Group came aboard for CLEVELAND's Training Readiness Evaluation (TRE). This consisted of an administrative inspection to determine whether or not the ship was prepared to commence Refresher Training (REFTRA) during August. After examining all departments thoroughly, the Fleet Training Group personnel reported CLEVELAND ready for training in all respects. In the following weeks many hours were spent at General Quarters conducting battle problems and damage control drills in preparation for REFTRA.

On 31 July, CLEVELAND played host to the following very distinguished Australian visitors: the Honorable William L. Morrison, Minister of State for Defense; Sir Arthur Tange, Secretary for the Department of Defense; ADMIRAL Sir Victor Smith, Chairman/Chief of Staff; Dr. Ian Storey, Private Secretary to Honorable William L. Morrison; Mr. Bill Pillwill, Press Secretary; and CDR B. R. Bambrick, Assistant Australian Naval Attache from Washington, D.C..

On 5 August CLEVELAND welcomed aboard young people from a NJROTC Unit, Santa Ana High School, and Explorer Posts from Tempe, Arizona; Clovis, New Mexico; and Carlsbad, New Mexico for a two day Youth Orientation Cruise which provided helo services for COMNAVAIRPAC. This was followed on the 11th of August by two weeks of Interim Refresher Training. Except for the weekend in port, CLEVELAND remained underway throughout these two weeks for training which included underway replenishment, flight operations, gunnery exercises, and frequent damage control and engineering drills. CLEVELAND's performance throughout the period was excellent, and her grades on the final battle problem drew praise from all observers.

CLEVELAND spent the month of September in port in upkeep and training. On 26 September a familiarization tour for nine Allied Officers from Taiwan, Korea, and Brazil was provided by CLEVELAND personnel.

A Nuclear Weapons Training Assist was conducted on 6 and 7 October in preparation for the NWA in December. On 13 October a "fast cruise" was conducted in preparation for getting underway for the Sub-Board of Inspection and Survey, Pacific material inspection to be conducted 14 October through 17 October. The INSURV found CLEVELAND fit for further Naval Service.

3 November found CLEVELAND underway for a week of training operations conducted to sharpen amphibious skills in preparation for Amphibious Landing Exercise E2-76. Included in the operations were a ship-to-shore movement in which CLEVELAND had the opportunity to act as Primary Control Ship (PCS). The primary objective was to enhance readiness to perform tasks normally assigned Amphibious Assault Ships. The USS FRESNO and USS POINT DEFIANCE joined in mutual support of the amphibious operations. Video-taped portions of the operations were used on the 2 December "The Mike Douglas Show" broadcast. During these drills and operations, preparations continued for the Nuclear Weapons Assist Team (NWAT) visit and the Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (NWAI) to be conducted 2 through 4 December. An inspection of selected areas and messing/berthing spaces was conducted by RADM R. G. Rogerson, COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC on 11 November followed by a messing and berthing inspection of 12 November by CAPTAIN M. J. Twite, Jr., COMPHIBRON THREE.

On 14 November the ship was underway for duty as a "Visit Ship" at Broadway Pier, San Diego, California. Over 1,800 people toured CLEVELAND in the two days, and judging by the comments made on CLEVELAND's appearance and the courtesy of the crew, a highly successful impression of the U.S. Navy was conveyed to our guests.

Following the very successful "Visit Ship", CLEVELAND got underway on 17 November for five days of local amphibious operations, (PHIBLEX/LDEX E2-76) with other ships in Amphibious Squadron THREE. The amphibious training exercise involved loading Army troops at anchorage from the Headquarters Company of the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, which CLEVELAND was to transport to Fort Lewis, Washington in December. The exercise provided for a combined Navy/Army Amphibious Exercise and proved highly successful in its execution, coordination and the level of cooperation achieved. Also involved in the operations were boats and crews from ACU ONE.

During the period 24 November and 5 December a food management team made an assist visit to provide training in food service techniques for galley and food service.

A Pre-Training Readiness Inspection (PTRI), an inspection to review CLEVELAND's readiness to conduct Amphibious Refresher Training which was scheduled for 6-17 January 1976, was conducted on 26 November. This inspection was similar to the Training Readiness Inspection received prior to interim REFTRA, but it concentrated on the ship's administrative and material readiness for amphibious operations.

On 3 December the Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (Nwai) was conducted and upon successfully completing the same CLEVELAND was certified as USS CLEVELAND Nuclear Transshipment Activity.

CLEVELAND left San Diego early in the afternoon of 7 December for Bangor, Washington to off load the men and equipment of the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division of Fort Lewis, Washington who had embarked during PHIBLEX/LDEX E2-76. After the debarkation at Bangor on 11 December CLEVELAND got underway on 12 December for Esquimalt, British Columbia, Canada arriving on the afternoon of 12 December. The citizens of Esquimalt were most hospitable to the USS CLEVELAND's Officers and crew and all hands thoroughly enjoyed the visit. London bus tours of the beautiful city of Victoria were arranged and many personnel took advantage of this unique opportunity. The ship's officers were graced with an invitation from the wardroom of the HMCS PROVIDER to a delicious buffet dinner party on Friday evening, 12 December, which was graciously accepted and appreciated by all who could attend. This port visit was a fitting end to CLEVELAND's steaming days for the CY 1975 and on 19 December she returned to her home port of San Diego, California where her crew commenced its holiday leave period - a quiet ending to a busy year.